

Hello, my name is Thomas Gilbertie and I'm a recent transfer student at Southern Connecticut State University and one of your constituents. I am testifying today because the whole reason I applied to and decided to go to SCSU was under the assumption that it would be more affordable for me to come here, but sadly, I was wrong. On average over the last three years at my previous institution, I was paying \$20,000 a year with room and board. Here at Southern Connecticut State, I am paying \$26,000 a year, with room and board. The fact that I'm paying more here than I was for an out of state private school is honestly insane to me. Now I know why my parents and relatives were recommending that I don't go to school in CT. The fact of the matter is that it's not affordable for students in state to go here, and cutting funding to CSCU schools would only exacerbate that problem. And it's honestly mind blowing that the Governor of this state, and this body, is even thinking about cutting educational funding, when just a week or so ago, this same body voted to extend the free and reduced lunch program with bipartisan support. And the reason that this is mindblowing is because, if you think about it, those same students are most likely going to CSCU schools right now. So the fact that you are considering cutting funding for the students who need it the most is frankly unacceptable. Especially when you consider that at the moment, the state has a large surplus. So logically, the state would use that funding to provide citizens of this state, more affordable and quality education. The very thing that we pride our state on. But instead, for some reason, the governor is not focusing on that and is instead focusing elsewhere. As someone who comes from a proud working class family, these cuts will hit home to me. But not only that, these cuts will affect my peers. My professors. My friends. The reality is, I should not be here right now. I should be back in New Haven, studying for school, and getting the best grades I can. But instead I'm here, getting on my hands and knees, begging and pleading, that you do the bare necessity of funding our schools. So please, do the right thing and fund CSCU schools.